Creating a Vision of Literacy for All Children

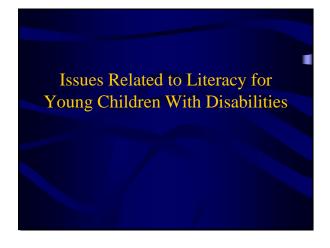Julie Gamradt, MS, CCC-SLP

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How Can This Be Accomplished?

- Establish high expectations
- Provide information
- Develop the skills, knowledge and know-how to make this a reality

Small Group Activity

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- Discuss definition of literacy
- Discuss typical literacy experiences for very young children
- Identify barriers to these experiences for individuals with significant disabilities

Issues Related to Literacy for Young Children With Disabilities

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- What is literacy?
- Prerequisite versus emergent literacy models
- What children learn about literacy prior to going to school
- Research regarding literacy and individuals with significant disabilities
- The need for professionals skilled in providing appropriate literacy related experiences for all children

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What is literacy?

- A broad view of literacy

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Prerequisite Model

- Sequential
- "Reading readiness"
- Speech before reading
- Cognitive level
- Writing/language arts separate

Emergent Literacy Model

- Literacy is everywhere
- Continuous process
- Begins at birth
- Part of normal life experiences

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What Children Learn About Literacy Prior to Going to School
(Patsy L. Pierce, 1993)

- Functions of print (0-3 years)
- Concepts about print
- Phonemic awareness
- Written language style

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Research on Literacy and Disability

- Light & Kelford-Smith (1993)
- Koppenhaver, Evans and Yoder (1991)
- Yoder (1993)

Light & Kelford-Smith (1993)

- Literacy is often a low priority for children who present other critical needs
- Differences in priorities can often affect experiences
- A report of less exposure to literacy during a typical week

Koppenhaver, Evans and Yoder (1991)

- Adult augmentative communication (AAC) users who were literate learned to read around the age of six
- Success attributed to parental support, high expectations and their own persistence and talents, rather than the educational system
- Reported regular exposure to literacy as children

Yoder (1993)

- Of 21 adult AAC users ages 18-31 years, only two had any experiences with literacy activities

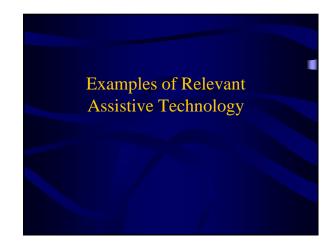## Issues Related to Literacy for Young Children With Disabilities

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- **The need for professionals skilled in providing appropriate literacy-related experiences for all children**

Importance of Professional Training Experiences Related to Literacy

- Develops a professional philosophy that values literacy for all children
- Provides families with helpful resources for supporting literacy development for their children
- Increases professionals' awareness of the assistive technology tools commonly needed by children with disabilities
- Increases awareness of designing more accessible activities from the get go

Importance of Professional Training Experiences Related to Literacy

- Increases professionals' competency using assistive technologies needed by children with disabilities to access literacy experiences
- Provides teachers with a tool chest of knowledge and skills that they can use

Examples of Relevant Assistive Technology

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- Communication boards
- Boardmaker
- Voice output devices
- Software and adaptations

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Voice Output Devices

- Provide a way for children to interact with other children and teachers during literacy activities
- Examples include: Big Mack, One Step, Cheap Talk, Voice in a Box, DynaMyte, DynaVox

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- Communication boards
- Boardmaker
- Voice output devices
- **Software and adaptations**

Software & Adaptations

- Examples include: IntelliKeys, Switch adaptations, IntelliPics, Speaking Dynamically Pro, Overlay Maker
- Develop simple IntelliKeys overlays and IntelliPics activities during this course

For More Information….

- Communication Aids Manufacturers Association- http://www.aacproducts.org/
- Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative- http://www.wati.org/
- AAC information & research- http://www.aac-rerc
- AAC information & research http://aac.unl.edu/